# Sprawl – Smart Growth

## A Report by The Green Door Alliance Inc.

***Summary Highlights***

The Green Door Alliance Inc. is a not-for-profit foundation that provides policy analysis and recommendations on land-use issues, originally related to the provincial and federal public lands at Pickering.

This report answers the questions:

- What is urban sprawl?
- What is wrong with sprawl?
- What can be done to stop sprawl?

• ***Urban sprawl*** **is low-density development beyond the edge of services and employment, which separates where people live from where they shop, work, recreate and educate – thus requiring cars to travel between zones.**

The antithesis of sprawl is smart growth:

• ***Smart growth*** **is sustainable, efficient, economical, affordable, least-polluting growth that utilizes to a maximum degree existing infrastructure and puts the least demand on the nation's natural capital of foodland, open space, energy, air and water. It enhances the sense of community and quality of life.**

Examples of sprawl are defined and illustrated – from massive development at Brooklin on Class 1 foodland to a single farmlot separation in Uxbridge.

The report takes a rather purist definition of sprawl – that any development outside existing urban areas is sprawl and that the forecast population growth of 2 million residents over 20 years can be accommodated at totally acceptable densities, without further greenfield destruction.

The motivations for sprawl development are reviewed and the issues are defined. Sprawl is nonsustainable, inefficient, uneconomic, polluting, socially debilitating and wasteful of natural capital.

The loss of an estimated 240,000 acres of foodland in the GTA by year 2021 is unacceptable, nonsustainable consumption of natural capital.

Only 5% of Canada can grow food. Only .5% qualifies as Class 1 agricultural land, a significant amount of which is in the GTA.

GTA sprawl residents pollute almost three times more than inner urban residents and this pollution is deadly.

Sprawl denies jobs, recreation and social opportunities to large groups of our people: youth, the elderly and the disabled.

We analyse studies done to date, such as: *The office of the Greater Toronto Area, Urban Structure Concepts Studies of 1990 and 1995*, which conservatively estimated savings to government of $16 billion capital and $2.5 to $4 billion annual operating cost at year 2021, based on modest density increases. This report estimates savings from a smart growth at $33 billion capital and $7 billion annual operating cost savings.

Finally, we propose legislative, policy, taxation and regulatory reforms that would remove sprawl subsidies, require users to pay for and mitigate the pollution and social costs borne by our people. Federal, provincial and municipal initiatives are proposed, including reforms to the *Planning Act* and Provincial Policy Statement, Official Plans and building codes, as well as conservation and redevelopment initiatives and new transportation funding priorities.

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**A Report By The Green Door Alliance Inc**

## I. Introduction:

The Green Door Alliance Inc. (GDA) is a not-for-profit charitable trust dedicated to the conservation of Greater Toronto Area open spaces. The GDA has researched and published a Plan for Land Use and Management of surplus federal and provincial public lands, expropriated in the early1970s for an airport and city. It has published numerous papers and submissions on: "communal servicing" of leap-frog development, Official Plan Amendments, the application of conservation agreements (easements) as a land use planning tool and participated in an advisory or advocacy role before municipal councils and Municipal Board hearings.

The GDA is opposed to sprawl and supports smart growth, private stewardship and the use of conservation agreements (easements) to conserve natural areas and quality foodland – our countryside. GDA initiatives sparked the conservation of 5000 acres of the Agriculture Preserve in south Pickering and 5500 acres of the federally owned Oak Ridges Moraine and 2,000 acres of Rouge Watershed.

This report aims to inform the public and decision makers about the factors and challenges of containing sprawl. It first defines sprawl, documents what is wrong with sprawl and finally provides a range of ***smart growth*** recommendations that would contain sprawl.

Although this analysis and the accompanying recommendations have broad Ontario application, specific references and examples center on Durham Region.

We take a rather purist (some might say extreme) position against all sprawl – that most growth can be accommodated within existing urban areas. We suggest that this uncompromising view will help clarify the issues even though some of our friends who are or have been contributors to sprawl may be annoyed.

***Sprawl*** and ***Smart Growth*** have become spin doctor dream words. The term smart growth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Surely, everyone is in favour of smart growth, if not you must favour dumb growth. These terms need defining.

## II. Urban Sprawl Defined

**• <u>Smart growth</u> is sustainable, efficient, economical, affordable, least polluting growth that utilizes to a maximum degree existing infrastructure and puts the least demand on the nation's natural capital of foodland, open space, energy, air and water. It enhances the sense of community and quality of life.**

**• <u>Urban sprawl</u> is low density development beyond the edge of services and employment, which separates where people live from where they shop, work, recreate and educate – thus requiring cars to travel between zones.**

The key concepts are: *low density, beyond services, separation from work and requiring cars.*

For example: Sprawl is what you see if you visit the once rural community of Brooklin, a hamlet within the greater Whitby area. Brooklin was once beyond the edge of water and sewer services, but this is no longer the case, since the Government of Ontario funded by Ontario taxpayers extended trunk sewers and water lines from Lake Ontario to Brooklin's Class 1 foodlands.

The low density housing being built, surrounding old Brooklin is a classic example of sprawl development. There is no local employment. Most of the new owners travel east on an improved Highway #7 until it merges with the 407. Some may travel south to meet the GO Train at Whitby.

The developer's application to amend the Durham Official Plan to allow urbanization at Brooklin was rejected by the municipality but approved on appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Presumably the reason was that since the province paid for the sewers and water it must also support the development.

The cost of buying a house in such a development is below market compared to

buying in the city or nearby urban developments. This is because the land was acquired at farm land prices at costs far less than would arise in an approved urban area.

A more recent sprawl phenomenon is estate housing built on golf courses. Monster houses such as those at Deer Creek in Ajax have town water and private sewer services. The developer applied for further urbanization using a private communal sewage system. The OMB recently rejected the application.

Other sprawl housing, such as the proposed Cherry Downs and Coppins Corners developments, want to combine golf course development and urbanization. These are higher density mixed dwelling designs lacking mixed land uses (shopping, schools, etc). They are to be serviced by communal water and sewerage systems. All are auto dependent bedroom developments that deprecate the open space systems, necessitate expensive time wasting auto travel and require public expenditures for roads, schools, busing, fire and police protection, among other services and infrastructure.

Golf Course Mansion

Estate residential developments are allowed by the Durham Official Plan subject to restrictions – maximum of 50 lots, private services and not in the Permanent Agriculture zone. Such estate residential developments are urban sprawl, bedroom clusters, and auto dependant. The preferred estate developments are in filling and minor expansion of existing hamlets. Most hamlet expansions are more acceptable than isolated estate or golf course housing since, they do not fragment the countryside, some public infrastructure and community amenities are in place (recreation halls, a library branch, convenience shopping, churches and possibly a local school). New estate developments have none of these amenities.

All incremental continuous extension of existing urban boundaries by the acquisition of one farm after another as is evident in Ajax, Oshawa, Whitby and Pickering is sprawl. Services are extended incrementally—roads, sewers, water, new schools and special services. But the buyers live distant from their work, shopping, and recreation. At these low densities public transit is uneconomic. These new suburbs are auto dependent, multiple car, single use, homogeneous urbanization, lacking diversity and the ambience to foster a sense of community.

Although present Official Plans require a minimum of a hundred acres per farm in the Permanent Agriculture Zone, 30 years ago the minimum farm size was 10 acres. This resulted in many farm properties being divided into 10 or 15 acre lots, even when there was no intent to sell. The result is hundreds of “lots of record”. Although these larger lots give a perception of open space, when developed they are auto dependent sprawl, separated from work, recreation and school.

Estate dwelling on 10 acres

Another example of sprawl development is single family dwellings built on farm lot separations – allowed by the Official Plans and only requiring an application to the Committee of Adjustment for approval. These are called retirement lots, originally intended to provide an on farm dwelling for a retiring farmer so he or she would not have to move when providing for family farm succession. In practice these separations usually provide some needed cash for retirement, farm improvements or machinery investment and instead of becoming a retirement home, a commuter moves in.

Farm consolidations also contribute to sprawl. When one or more 100 acre farms are grouped under one farm enterprise, the dwellings surplus to the new farm enterprise are sold usually to non farmers. The new owners become sprawl commuters.

Farm separation, 7th concession, Uxbridge

A concept of ***nodal*** development has evolved as a less injurious alternative to incremental spread and is documented in the GTA Urban Studies.[1] This concept would concentrate development in centers within the GTA at densities of 2,177 persons per sq.km. in suburban areas and 4,344 persons per sq. km. in urban areas. All Regional Official Plans promote nodal, environmentally sensitive, compact development.

Farm house in Pickering

But the reality is that most newly approved or designated areas for development still allow spread (sprawl) anywhere along the urban fringe. Most sprawl developments are promoted as nodal and, despite the best intentions of Official Plans, development proceeds on the periphery at 4 to 20 units per ha. This has been the reality for the past 20 years.[2] If *Nodal* development became the rule, sprawl would be reduced but not eliminated. The node could also be an existing urban area.

[1] IBI et al Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study 1990 and Revisited 1995, Office of the Greater Toronto Area.

[2] Professor Robert M. Wright, Centre for Landscape Research, University of Toronto, February 2000, THE EVOLVING PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE GREATER TORONTO AREA: SPACE, FORM AND CHANGE, Page 52.

Perhaps a quick look at smart growth will help define sprawl because smart growth is the opposite of sprawl.

## III. Smart Growth

**Smart growth is sustainable, efficient, economical, affordable, least polluting growth that utilizes to a maximum degree existing infrastructure and puts the least demand on the nation's natural capital of foodland, open space, energy, air and water. It enhances a sense of community and the quality of life.** Smart growth means planning our communities so that our streets will be safer, our neighbourhoods will be nicer places to live, our air and water will be less polluted and our parks, farms and open space will be protected.

Some object that high-density will lead to a lower quality of life in the city. However, population densities in Toronto at Yonge and Eglinton, for instance are already at the level of 10,000 persons per sq-km. – 2,500 more per sq-km than the 7,500 needed to allow a subway to run at a profit.[3] And the quality of life at Yonge and Eglinton is excellent – apart from the smog days of summer, and those are caused, not by denser housing but by the one million vehicles that race around Metro every day.

The City of Toronto has traditionally understood and promoted smart growth. Quoting from *Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping our future*.[4]

***"All Across North America and around the globe, 'City Living' is becoming the mantra for urban vitality and economic prosperity in the new century. In the history of cities, the notion of accommodating growth by sprawling and consuming the countryside has been a very short-lived, but powerful phenomenon, beginning in earnest in the post-war period. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, to marvel at how the suburban dream has been advertised as an inexorable trend as if the need to sprawl resided in the very consciousness of individuals. In fact, for the past half-century what we have experienced is the marketing of a lifestyle. But, governments around the world are beginning to realize, it is a lifestyle that is self-defeating and cannot sustain the 21st century city. Each successive suburban community usurps the countryside that drew the settlers of the previous subdivision to the urbanized fringe in the first place. The pursuit of a large house on the urban fringe just minutes from the ever diminishing countryside, with two cars in the garage, not only raises false hopes, it is neither fiscally nor environmentally sustainable."***

[3] Joell Vanderwagen, Transportation for Tomorrow (manuscript) qtd. IBI letter to Ministry of Transportation of Ontario.

[4] Paula M. Dillon, Toronto Plan Directions Report, Toronto at the Crossroads, Shaping Our Future.

***What Is Wrong With Sprawl?***

The market for sprawl housing is rather a recent phenomena (see Shaping Our Future, quoted above). The Urban Development Institute (UDI) is dedicated to sprawl greenfield development. They argue that they are only supplying demand – that home buyers like their product. But supply also drives demand. The supplier advertises, promises idyllic life styles, country living, forest glens, ravine lots or whatever sells.

The whole power of corporate America pushes lifestyle advertising. The rich, successful and sexy are the conspicuous consumers of mansions and gas guzzling autos. No one advertises road rage, gridlock, lost family time, and pollution. The non sustainable sprawl commuter is not denigrated – but gradually sprawl is becoming a dirty word.

Would buyers be as enthusiastic if they had to pay the full costs of sprawl – that is if they were not subsidized by existing taxpayers and were required to pay for all the resources they consume, services they enjoy and pollution they inflict? Would buyers welcome a reasonable alternative that saved them many thousands of hours and dollars?

In addition to being subsidized, it can be argued that sprawl provides choice, however, it also limits choice. Auto dependent development is not affordable to many; thus modest income working families have no choice. There is no need to "gate" such subdivisions – only a select income group can afford the cost of commuting.

The GDA does not suggest that government tell people where to live. But government is responsible for equitable, fair taxation and for conservation of national/regional assets such as air, water and foodland. Recent past developments, illustrated, are encouraged by government subsidy in the form of arterial roads, highways, trunk sewers, new schools, busing, police and fire protection, (see Dr. Pamela Blais).[5]

Meanwhile, Official Plans attempt to maintain a twenty year supply of open space for development based on sprawl densities, population growth forecasts and past trends. Possible brownfield redevelopment and intensification opportunities have been ignored by all municipalities except Toronto.

Converting farms to subdivisions and shopping malls is not rocket science. The technical/engineering skills are minor. The developer has available for a fee, consultants to prepare road designs, internal drainage, sewer, water, electrical supply systems and advertising campaigns. The more complicated infrastructure – sewage disposal, water purification, highway and transit are regional/provincial responsibilities. Every new subdivision starts with open space – a farm.

There are no demolition costs, few restrictions and cheap land. As soon as rezoning is approved the value flips from a few thousand dollars per acre farm prices to tens of thousands of dollars per acre. Greenfield developments are very profitable and many multi-millionaires have been created, so it is very logical for developers to praise and support the process. It is simple and lucrative.

[5] Dr. Pamela Blais, The Economics of Urban Form - Revisited, prepared for the GTA Task Force. Section 4.4, pages 43-44.

The most significant skills for a developer are political and public relations. Developers need friends at Queen's Park and within local and regional councils. In their view the *Planning Act* and Provincial Policy Statement must be developer friendly. Municipal councils are befriended in order to smooth Official Plan amendments, rezoning and the site-plan approvals process.

Campaign funding helps to endear most politicians to the developers and to encourage them to be sensitive to their needs. This helps expedite approval, minimal restrictions and demands. But the internal profits of the development industry is insufficient reason to subsidize this industry or ignore public costs.

The problems with sprawl are mostly self evident – history has documented the logistical folly of overextended lines of supply and communications.

### *The Social, Financial and Pollution Costs of Sprawl*

Sprawl has been condemned as *nonsustainable, inefficient, uneconomic, polluting, socially debilitating and wasteful of natural capital.*

***Non-sustainable.*** Sprawl consumes our natural capital of foodland, clean air, pure water and natural habitat. The supply of foodland is finite. Only 1/2 of 1% of Canada is Class 1 agricultural land. They aren't making any more.

***Inefficient.*** Efficiency is the measure of output divided by input. Clearly in the case of housing supply, the output is, dwellings for x people and the input is land and infrastructure; the greater the amount of land used and the higher the infrastructure cost for x residents the more inefficient is the supply of shelter. From another angle, if the output is access to work and the input is the cost of access, the least cost (shortest distance) is most efficient.

***Uneconomic.*** Clearly the cost to government and individual communities, taxes for new infrastructure and homeowner expenditures for auto operation and lost time commuting are wasteful of public and personal resources. For example, the abandonment of existing schools, not because they are obsolete but because the population has fled to new greenfield developments requiring new schools, is a waste of capital assets and a burden on all tax-payers.

***Polluting.*** The primary source of air pollution is auto emissions. Air pollution costs have been estimated in various studies at between 2 and 5 cents per veh-km.[6] The Ontario Medical Association estimates that only two pollutants – ozone and microscopic solids – result in 835 deaths, health care and lost productivity costs of $522 million in the GTA annually. The Toronto Health Department included more pollutants, including Carbon Monoxide in their estimate of premature deaths from air pollution in Toronto and claimed twice as many deaths as the OMA study.

[6] Miller and Moffet, Litman, DRI-McGraw Hill, and IBI.

Sprawl is private auto dependent – the developer usually supplies a two car garage, and frequently other cars are parked in the driveway or on the lawn.

The 1996 University of Toronto, Travel Statistics Report, documents that Durham Region residents travel 6,934 veh/km. per year, while pre amalgamation Toronto residents drive annually only 2,487 veh/km. annually.

Cars parked in front of estate house, Claremont

The Region's sprawl residents pollute almost three times more than do inner urban residents. The run off from sprawl subdivisions pollutes our steams and rivers. Wood lots and farm hedge rows give way to pavement.

***Socially Debilitating.*** Time spent commuting, often in gridlock is time away from family parenting responsibilities or time unavailable to the commuter's employer. For latch-key kids, television becomes the surrogate parent. Although very real quantification of this effect is difficult, the debilitating effects are obvious. The elderly and youth who don't rate a drivers license are without any transit – they are denied jobs, recreation, shopping and opportunities to socialize.

Commuters speeding to work

***Wasteful of Natural Capital.*** According to the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Economics Impact Study: "The physiography, soil capability and heat units that characterize the GTA combine to create a prime agricultural area. It's geographic characteristics qualify it as part of the 5% of the Canadian land mass that is classified as prime agricultural land. A significant portion of it is part of the even more limited 0.5% of the Canadian land mass that qualifies as Class 1 under the Canada Land Inventory." The study continues, "Overall GTA farms have a higher productivity than do farms in the other parts of the province. Measured in terms of total farm gate sales per acre, GTA farms have a higher sales per acre ($779) when compared to the provincial average ($560)." [7]

[7] Greater Toronto Area, Agricultural Economic Impact Study, Walton & Hunter Planning Associates et al, Nov., 1999.

Canada Land Inventory, Class 1 to 3 are lands most productive of field crops. Lands south of the Moraine in the GTA are also in a desirable agro-climatic zone of high numbers of frost free days and crop heat units.

In 1967 Class 1 to 3 lands were 62% of the GTA

By 1992 Class 1 to 3 lands were 49% of the GTA

By 1999 Class 1 to 3 lands were 44% of the GTA

By 2000, including land approved for development, only 39% of the GTA will be Class 1 to 3. Continuing sprawl could result in up to another 900 sq-km (240,000 acres) being lost by year 2021.[8]

407 destruction

The Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) reports: "150,000 acres of farmland were lost to urbanization between 1976 and 1996" and "If the rate of loss of farmland continues at 7,500 acres annually an additional 165,000 acres will be lost by 2021." [9]

The recently built and planned further extension of expressway 407 only exacerbates the problem. This superhighway has been built to accommodate sprawl. It cuts a broad swath through Class 1 Pickering agriculture lands.

With farm commodity prices at an all time low it may be argued that conservation of foodland lacks priority – that conservation of the countryside, fresh air, clear streams, an open vista, and wood lots are of more value. Whatever your priorities, conservation of foodland is conservation of all open space. But one should not depreciate the value of this non renewable resource. Wild gyrations in food supply and price have characterized the market throughout human history.

Despite record crops in Brazil and the American mid west last year, there is a mere one months inventory, before the next supply comes on the market. Watch the weather! A minor drought anywhere and food prices could inflate as fast as the NASDAQ deflated in 2001.

The non-sustainable conversion of our natural capital of foodland to urban uses is economically, in the long term, very foolish – theft of our grand children's heritage. It is doubly foolish to obliterate local foodlands, because other countries are also paving their farms. The sprawl disease is not just an Ontario problem. Throughout the US, despite their relative abundance of open space, sprawl is a big issue.

[8] Robert Wright, The Evolving Physical Condition of the Greater Toronto Area: Space Form and ChangE, U of T Feb., 2000.

[9] Professor Robert Wright, A Greater Toronto Area Countryside Strategy, GTSB, June 2000 estimated the loss at between 600and 900 sq. km (240,000 to 160,000 acres).

***The Cost of Sprawl in the United States***

Numerous American municipalities and states have analysed the costs of sprawl. The following random sample illustrates their concern:

"The Costs of Sprawl Outpace Tax Revenues: Sprawl development not only consumes more land than high density development, it requires more tax- supported infrastructure such as roads, sewer lines, police services and schools." One study found that New Jersey communities would save $1.3 billion in infrastructure costs over 20 years by avoiding sprawl development.[10]

"Another prediction was that even modest implementation of higher density development would save the State of South Carolina $2.1 billion in infrastructure costs over 20 years."

"In Nantucket, Massachusetts, each housing unit was found to cost taxpayers an average of $265 a year more than the unit contributed in taxes."

"In Loudon County, Virginia – the fastest growing community in the Washington D.C. area the cost to service 1000 new units exceeded their tax contribution by as much as $2.3 million."

"Bowdoinham, Maine, chose to purchase development rights on a 307 acre dairy farm when research indicated that the costs of supporting the development would not be met by anticipated property revenues." *"Undeveloped land is the best tax break a town has."* [11]

"A study at Woodbridge, Connecticut, revealed that taxpayers would be better off buying a 292 acre tract than permitting it to be developed." *"This town can not afford not to buy land."* [12]

"Land conservation is often less expensive for local government than subdivision style development," writes Planner Holly L. Thomas. "The old adage that cows don't go to school expresses a documented fact – that farm and open land, far from being a drain on local taxes, actually subsidize local government by generating more property taxes than they demand in services."

"Consider, for example, that in 1999, voters passed more than 70% of 240 local ballot initiatives governing preservation of open space, creating more than $7.5 billion in funding for land conservation. A record 1,000 state land use reform bills were introduced in legislatures last year, and 200 of these were enacted into law." [13]

[10] The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space, The Trust For Public Lands, 1999.

[11] Selectman George Christopher.

[12] Robert Greg, President of the Woodbridge Land Trust.

[13] Linda Baker, E Magazine, June 2000.

It is comforting to know that our US trading partner realizes that sprawl is a disease requiring treatment.

### *The Cost of Sprawl in the GTA*

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and more specifically the City of Toronto have understood the evils of sprawl – defeat of the Spadina and Scarborough expressways, downtown housing redevelopment, the reform Councils of the 60's and 70's and the writings of planning guru, Jane Jacobs provided witness against sprawl and evidence of enlightened support for smart growth.

About a decade ago, the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, a provincial Ministry, engaged the help of a consortium of consultants, under the leadership of IBI Group. They produced *"The Urban Structures Concepts Study 1990"* (USCS) and updated it in 1995. Dr. Pamel Blais of Berridge, Lewinberg, Greenberg, Dark, Gabor Ltd. provided the economic analysis component. Key conclusions were: [14]

• "Continued greenfield developments as at present, will require $90 billion of capital investments in new infrastructure over the next 25 years. This on top of ongoing expenditures on and replacement of existing infrastructure as well as operating and maintenance expenditures."

• "The current development pattern is a high cost one in comparison to more efficient alternatives. An urban form that relies to a greater degree on re-urbanization, more compact development and mixed land uses would decrease the capital investment required for roads, transit, water and sewer services by an estimated $10 billion to $16 billion and decrease operating and maintenance costs by $2.5 to $4 billion" [1990 dollars].

• "When costs such as those associated with emissions, publicly borne health care and accident policing are added to the capital and operating and maintenance cost savings, a conservative estimate would suggest that a total of about $700 million to $1 billion per year could be saved in the GTA by accommodating future growth in a more efficient urban pattern." (Note: The above estimates are for maintaining hard services for selected government borne costs. Later in this report we will include some user and external costs).

• "Further substantial savings could be achieved by altering the standards to which infrastructure of all kinds is built, to allow more efficient, flexible, sustainable and cost effective alternatives."

[14] Dr. Pamela Blais, The Economics of Urban Form, December 1995, Pages 1 and 2.

• "The mechanisms that we currently have in place to raise revenues to pay for new infrastructure (property tax, development charges, user fees, provincial income tax) in effect generate a subsidy to residents of low density suburban areas by residents of higher density, mixed use areas. These subsidies artificially lower the cost of inefficient urban development, and distort the urban housing and property markets."

• "These conclusions are based on quite modest reductions of urban sprawl." [15]

The IBI study also examined selected costs of three optional development scenarios. The estimated costs were primarily those borne by government. These are described in the following section.

## IV. The Financial Benefits of Smart Growth

### *Capital and Operating Costs for Spread and Smart Growth In The GTA*

• ***Spread.*** A continuation of current development patterns – the base or trend case. Population growth and employment would be distributed outside the existing urban area in low density greenfield developments on the fringe. 900 sq. km. of greenfields would be urbanized. (**Note:** 1 square kilometer = 100 hectares.)

• ***Nodal.*** Population and employment are distributed outside the existing central built up areas. Development would be concentrated in high density nodes. Land required would be 590 sq. km.

• ***Central.*** Most growth would occur inside existing built up areas on underutilized lands mostly within Metro. An extra 1.6 million people would be accommodated in Metro at densities similar to those in the old City of Toronto. Other Regions would grow according to job availability. About 350 sq. km. of greenfields would be needed.

Although the nodal and central options use less greenfield space than the spread, sprawl option, none assume maximum redevelopment/intensification and a pro active pursuit of smart growth.

This study, initiated a decade ago and updated in 1995, and most importantly the economic evaluation of Dr. Pamela Blais has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the cost of urban development.

For each scenario the study estimated capital cost and selected operating costs.

[15] Dr. Pamela Blais, The GTA Urban Structures Concept Study, Revisited (IBI Group, August 1995).

***Capital costs*** included:

- roads: freeway and arterial
- transit: new rapid transit and rolling stock
- water/sewer: trunk sewers and treatment facilities
- local services: internal to a subdivision
- open space: land for parks etc
- storm water management
- school busing and handicapped transit
- solid waste disposal

***Operating costs*** included:

- public transit estimated cost per vehicle-hour by type
- roads: average costs per lane-km. including maintenance &repair
- auto: annual vehicle operating & ownership costs to owners based on $0.25 per veh/km
- school busing and handicapped transit
- solid waste disposal

The analysis assigns capital and operating costs as above, in 1990 dollars, for each scenario. But there are many other costs, external to government which have been omitted and some have been understated.

The GDA suggests that cost analysis for a ***smart growth*** scenario would provide valuable input to municipal and provincial decision makers. Smart growth costs should be compared to the spread option – the one that is presently in place. Comparative land requirements could be:

| | ***Spread*** | ***Smart growth*** |
|---|---|---|
| New residential land | 76,550 ha | 5,000 ha |
| New industrial land | 13,750 ha | 2,000 ha |
| Redeveloped land | 1,000 ha | 6,000 ha |
| **Total** | **91,300 ha** | **13,000 ha** |

A ***smart growth*** scenario would redevelop the present City of Toronto to accommodate an additional 1 million people.[16] This leaves only a forecast 1 million to be accommodated within the existing urban envelopes of Durham, York, Peel and Halton.

The ***nodal*** option which economist Dr. Blais conservatively estimated would save up to $16 billion in government capital costs and $2.5 to $4.0 billion in operating costs was based on densities of 4,344 persons per sq-km in urban areas and 2,177 persons per sq-km in suburban areas. However, the IBI consulting firm in a letter to the Ministry of Transport estimated densities of 7,500 persons per sq-km to support a subway and 5,000 persons per sq-km for light rail/streetcar and 4,500 persons per sq-km for frequent express bus services.[17]

[16] Toronto Plan Directions Report, Toronto at the Crossroads, Page 14

[17] IBI letter to Minister of Transportation of Ontario, qtd in Joel Vanderwagen, "Transportation for Tomorrow" (manuscript).

A ***smart growth*** scenario would reduce road building and fund public transit, thus conserving land and reducing capital expense.

The *Economics of Urban Form* report, prepared for the GTA Task Force by Dr. Pamela Blais included a table titled "Revised Capital Cost Summary." To compare capital costs for a smart growth option, we have provided judgmental estimates of the smart-growth capital for the cost elements used by Dr. Blais, based on minimal new open space consumption and major intensification and redevelopment. The table below shows our ***smart growth*** estimates compared to the ***spread*** or sprawl Option.

***Capital Costs (over 29 years)***

| | ***$ billions (1995 dollars)*** | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Transportation*** | ***Spread*** [18] | ***Smart*** |
| Transit | 4.8 | 18.0 |
| Major Roads & Expressways | 19.93 | 7.0 |
| ***Hard Services*** | | |
| Water and Sewer | 3.72 | 2.0 |
| Local Services-roads | 21.4 | 5.0 |
| Total Hard Services and Transportation | 49. 85 | 32.0 |
| ***Greening/Environment*** | | |
| Open space | 1.1 | 0.5 |
| Storm water | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| ***Human Services*** | | |
| Hospitals | 4.45 | 2.5 |
| Social & health | 2.68 | 1.5 |
| Education | 6.4 | 3.0 |
| Protection | 2.83 | 1.0 |
| Culture & Rec | 10.9 | 6.0 |
| Parks | 2.32 | 2.0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$ 82.53** billion | **$ 49.5** billion |

We suggest that the Government of Ontario define smart growth spending targets and carefully and independently estimate costs and benefits for the whole Ontario economy. Such research is essential to the public dialogue on sprawl/smart growth and to support planning and taxation policies for the next century.

Dr. Pamela Blais's *Economics of Urban Form Report* also presented operating costs but the author noted that time constraints impaired extensive analysis of these. Therefore to evaluate operating costs we refer later to more extensive analysis by Brian Buckles for the GDA[19] which will be referred to in the next subsection of this paper.

[18] Dr. Pamela Blais, The Economics of Urban Form, Revisited (December 5, 1995), Page 31.

[19] Mr. Brian Buckles, Green Door Alliance Inc., Smart Growth Thoughts/Observations, Appendix I, letter report to: Hon. Chris Hodgson, June 23, 2001.

Under a ***smart growth*** option the following changes to Greater Toronto's transportation infrastructure are suggested:

- Highway 403 and 407 to Pickering completed
- The entire 'Lets Move' program of Sheppard line, Yonge/University Loop, and Harbour Front completed
- A second cross town line (Sheppard /Finch)
- A 50% less expensive arterial road network
- New radial lines on existing rights of way
- Improved GoTransit Services
- One 407/401 link east of Pickering /Ajax
- Extension of Harbourfront LRT to Kipling
- Rail link to Pearson International Airport

Transit capital costs rise from $7.16 billion for the spread option to $18.0 billion for the ***smart growth*** concept. But road costs decrease from $19.93 billion to $7.0 billion. For example 407 would turn south in Pickering and merge with 401 between Ajax and Whitby to serve the redeveloped urban node of Whitby/Oshawa and Ajax/Pickering.

No major North/South Link between 407 and 401 on the Markham /Pickering boundary area would be built. Expressway 407 east of Markham would be a by-pass road and not a sprawl development corridor.

The ***smart growth*** option would not add any new expressways, only complete present projects and divert travel to transit modes, dedicated bus lanes, live-work opportunities, cycling, car pooling etc. Therefore expressway costs could be reduced by about $13 billion.

Also as density rises cycling and walking trips also increase. In Copenhagen 32% of trips to work are by foot. We may not be as smart or athletic as the Danes but a smart growth strategy could result in a modest 15% walking trips.

A revised total ***capital cost estimate for a smart growth scenario would be $49.5 billion*** compared to $82.5, $69.0 and $72.9 billions for the spread, central and nodal options, described in the 1995 Dr. Blais Report[20] – **a potential saving of $33 billion.**

### *Operating, Travel and External Costs*

It is irresponsible for government to make growth planning and taxing decisions without an adequate financial data base and intelligent impartial forecasts. We urge that this be done. In the meantime we must rely on our own analysis of the limited credible information available.

[20] Dr. Pamela Blais, The Economics of Urban Form, Revisited, December 5, 1995, Page 33.

The GDA analysis is based on travel estimates derived from the latest (1996) University of Toronto, *Transportation Tomorrow Survey*. It is a more supportable analysis of operation and maintenance, travel costs and other external costs than provided to date. See: *Bringing the full costs of auto use into growth management decision making in the GTA.*[21] Two scenario are presented.

***Scenario 1 (Sprawl).*** The estimated 6.5 million residents of the GTA will travel the 1996 average vehicle trips per resident of 4,517.

***Scenario 2 (Nodal).*** One million residents would be added to Toronto for a total of 3,305,600 and as a result this additional density provides more opportunity for public transit, walk/cycle etc. than the current average. Auto driving would decrease from the 1996 average of 3,036 veh-km. to the 1996 average of pre-amalgamation Toronto at 2,487 veh-km. The Scenario 2 (Nodal) is close to but not identical to the ***smart growth*** option presented in this paper because Buckle's analysis is based on travel statistics not on an arbitrary land use allocation. The Buckle's Nodal Scenario is not the same as the GTA, IBI, Pamela Blais Urban Studies definition of Nodal – no density is estimated but greater transit travel is deduced from established GTA travel statistics.

It was further assumed that 1 million new residents would be added <u>*outside*</u> Toronto in a more nodal fashion for a total of 3,158,900 and as a result of this greater nodal density and the opportunity this creates for transit and non auto trips, the current four regions average veh-km. of 6,114 would be reduced to the current GTA average including Toronto, of 4,517.

**<u>Scenario 1 requires 6.7 billion more Veh-Km annually than the nodal scenario.</u>**

The nodal scenario proposes compact growth intensification/redevelopment in Toronto and in large nodes such as Oshawa/Whitby and Ajax Pickering. So these urban cities linked by GO rail would develop densities supportive of transit similar to our previous definition of Smart Growth. The 4,517 veh-km. figure is probably low for the sprawl option and the 2,487 figure could also be too small. But it is entirely reasonable to assume that implementation of a ***smart growth nodal*** strategy would reduce by 6.7 billion per year the auto veh-km. traveled, below the present sprawl trend over the forecast 20 years.

[21] Mr. Brian Buckles, Green Door Alliance Inc., Smart Growth Thoughts/Observations, Appendix I, letter report to: Hon. Chris Hodgson, June 23, 2001.

Based on the 6.7 billion reduction in travel and by applying estimated cost in ¢ per km. provides an estimate of operating costs for a range of impacts.

| Impacts | Reference | Cost to Economy per veh/km | Annual Savings $millions |
|---|---|---|---|
| (a) accidents | GDA, Appendix 1, Pg 4 [22] | 5.25¢ | 351.75 |
| (b) air pollution | " | 5.20¢ | 348.40 |
| (c) congestion, parking | " | 12.936 | 866.67 |
| (d) travel cost | AAA | 47.0 | 3,149.00 |
| (e) lost time | GDA Appendix 1 | | 2,000.00 |
| (f) operations | GDA Appendix 1, pg10 | | 1,000.00 |
| ***Total Annual Estimated Saving from Smart Growth*** | | | ***$7,715.82 million*** |

Costs of noise, water and land pollution and consumption of natural capital (foodland) are not included in the above, however should we not attribute a value to the non-sustainable loss in perpetuity of our foodland natural capital? What is the loss resulting from the conversion of a cold water trout stream to a storm drainage ditch?

Forecasts are not facts – the future is unknown but clearly it can be concluded that:

***The costs of sprawl are very large, very significant and very ignored by government decision makers.***

The cause of these costs is private auto travel necessitated by long commutes between work, recreation, education and home. We previously estimated 6,700,000,000 veh-km. additional travel per year 2021, based on only 1 million of the population growth spreading into the Regions. It was assumed that the other 1 million would settle in Toronto. But if Toronto is not supported with public transit financing, spread will continue and Toronto may not be able to accept a million new residents. A smart growth alternative that assumes the whole 2 million settle in urban areas of Toronto and the Regions would have the theoretical potential of saving 13,400,000,000 vehicle-km per year (2021). How many fewer cars and fewer accidents would result? How much less pollution would there be? Dividing the total veh-km. above by the average veh-km. traveled per resident equals 1,900,000 fewer cars to accommodate and pollute.

### *Transportation Costs across North America*

Urban sprawl has become a major issue throughout North America. Following is a glimpse of other's concerns – a few pertinent quotations:

- Cars consume 15% to 20 % of household budgets.[23]

[22] Mr. Brian Buckles, Green Door Alliance Inc., Smart Growth Thoughts/Observations, Appendix I, letter report to: Hon. Chris Hodgson, June 23, 2001.

[23] Katie Alvard, Divorce Your Car, New Society Publishers, 2000.

- An estimate of the costs of oil pollution (spills) and clean up costs is about $10 billion yearly.[24]
- The AAA report car costs at $14.96 per day, whether they're driven or not.
- Driving an average car costs US 47¢/mile out of pocket expense.
- In Canada an average new car costs can $9,011 to own and drive 24,000 km-year.
- Average ownership alone cost about Can $5,854 a year.
- Every dollar spent on operating a car imposes $2.70 in external costs says one estimate.[25]
- In Canada vehicle licenses and fuel tax revenue pay for only about 56% of highway costs: over $5 billion a year comes from income taxes.
- Regional and Provincial police spend most of their time on auto services.
- The U.S. with Canada's help spends an estimated $50 billion a year defending the middle east oil supply.
- Oil companies receive vast tax benefits – accelerated depletion allowances and low income tax. The oil producer subsidy is $321 billion a year in the U.S.[26]
- Free parking is not free. A parking space in a garage structure costs $7000 to $20,000 per space. There are 110 million parking spaces in the U.S. (1999).[27] About 95% of U.S. commuters get free parking – that's a perk with a market value of $1,800 per year.
- In Canada, the estimated cost of parking adds $746 per year to the cost of home ownership.
- Congestion costs may total as much as $168 billion in the U.S. Congestion may also add an estimated $24 billion to $40 billion to the cost of goods.
- In 68 cities studied by the Texas Transportation Institute, drivers lost billions of hours stuck in traffic in 1998 which cost $72 billion and wasted six billion gallons of fuel.[28]
- Public costs including emergency services, medical costs, productivity losses, vocational rehabilitation – various estimates place US traffic costs at $150 to $360 billion per year.[29]
- Planning Professor, Reid Ewing estimates that gasoline tax would have to be as high as $6.60 (U.S.) per gallon, to reflect the true cost of driving to the economy and environment.[30]
- Pollution costs from cars amounts to at least $54.2 billion a year and perhaps as much as $232 billion.

[24] Researcher Dale Lee, in Litman: Transportation Cost Analysis.

[25] Litman, Transportation Cost Analysis.

[26] Researcher Dale Lee, in Litman: Transportation Cost Analysis.

[27] Oregon Environmental Council.

[28] Kitcham and Komonoff: Win Win Transportation.

[29] Kitcham and Komonoff: Win Win Transportation.

[30] Philip Thompson, US News and World Report, April 27, 1998, Page 23.

Several North American studies in the 1990s attempt to quantify either the total costs of driving or driving caused external costs. For example:

The World Resources Institute estimated that the U.S. spends nearly $300 billion per year on the car, (that's about $1500 above and beyond out-of-pocket costs paid directly by drivers). Peter Miller and John Moffat figured car costs to be somewhere between $380 and 660 billion a year. Mark Delucchi calculated external cost of cars at 79¢ to $1.20 per vehicle mile and as much as $9,927 to $15,053 per car per year. A study by Brian Ketcham and Charles Komanoff calculated external costs of roadway transport at $729 billion a year, and overall costs of driving at $544 trillion in the U.S. – about $7,700 per car per year. Todd Litman figures that the total cost of driving ranges from 84¢ to $1.30 per mile in the US. That's the equivalent of about $2 trillion a year.[31]

As described in the October issue of The Business Executive, a 1986 U of T study estimated road congestion adds $3 billion per year to the cost of goods movement in the GTA. This estimate could be as high as $9 billion.[32]

- In Canada, says one study, external costs average Cdn.$3000 per car per year.[33] The very great cost of car crashes was not estimated in the GTA, Urban Studies Concepts study, so we have scant Canadian information but consider the following:
- Car crashes kill 500,000 people worldwide each year.
- U.S. car crashes in 1998 killed 41,000 people and left 2,200,000 disabled.
- In Canada between three and four thousand die annually in crashes.[34]
- Car crashes kill younger people disproportionately.
- In the US car crashes are the leading killer of children and young adults age one to 24. They cause 40% of deaths among 16 to 20 year olds and are the No.1 killer of women under 34.
- Cars cause 500 time as many deaths as does rapid transit.[35]

In the Economics of Urban Form Summary, previously referenced, Dr. Pamela Blais comments on the GTA Urban Studies Concept Study (USCS)-Revisited: Section 3.10:

***"It is worth noting that none of the urban form scenarios presented in the USCS is explicitly a cost minimizing urban structure concept. An urban form which seeks to minimize overall infrastructure costs would likely be a hybrid of the central concept (making use of all available existing land and infrastructure within the already urbanized envelope), and contiguous greenfields urban development assumed under the spread and nodal scenarios, but at higher densities than those envisaged under the spread scenario,***

[31] MacKenzie et al, The Going Rate; Moffet and Miller, The Price of Mobility, ii, Litman, Transportation Cost Analysis.

[32] Wendy Peters, Major Traffic Crises Looms in the GTAH-W, The Business Executive, Vol. 6, Page 4.

[33] Go for Green, Developing Communities for Active Transportation, (Ottawa: Go for Green, 1998).

[34] AAMA Motor Vehicle Facts & Figures, 1997, 98.

[35] Bureau of Transportation Statistics Annual Report 1996, 69.

***and excluding the discontiguous development in outlying nodes contemplated under the nodal scenario. Such a scenario would likely produce lower costs than any of the three concepts presented in the USCS."***

Certainly, a smart growth option would produce much lower costs – lower by billions of dollars – lower municipal and provincial taxes and lower personal cost.

We regret that we can not provide better Canadian estimates for all auto commuting costs but the Canadian experience is North American experience. The conclusion is inescapable – sprawl commuting puts an awesome burden on our people and our economy.

In addition, the solutions are available. Better utilization of vacant and under developed urban land could accommodate all foreseeable forecast population growth without urbanizing any more foodland but change will be phased. Therefore in our estimates of smart growth cost reduction the authors have assumed the optimal solution. Five thousand acres of new residential land and 2,000 acres of new industrial land are urbanized. Some essential principles must be adopted.

- No servicing beyond the committed urban boundary.
- A moratorium on highway construction, except completion of 403 and 407 to Pickering where 407 would be linked to 401 between Ajax and Whitby.
- Removal of zoning restrictions on homeowners' freedom to add garden apartments, granny suites, and bachelorettes.
- Incentives for redevelopment/intensification, such as taxing underutilized urban land.
- Improved public transit, LRT and dedicated freeway lanes.

It is assumed that the 2 million forecast population growth can be mostly accommodated within the present urban boundaries as suggested: The actual population distribution will depend on provincial policy, the creativity and innovation of regional politicians and the cooperation of the development/construction industry. We suggest a growth distribution target to accommodate the 2 million forecast within existing urban areas as follows: Toronto -1,000,000; Durham - 150,000; York - 400,000; Peel - 300,000 and Halton - 150,000.

## V. Smart Growth Strategy Recommendations

### *Public Perception*

Before Government can treat the sprawl disease, the public will have to recognize that it is a disease sapping our economy, security and well being. Reform must have public support. The public is frequently ahead of government in grasping a problem. Everyone likes lower taxes, plenty of good jobs and a healthy environment. The assumption that

these can only be achieved by subsidizing sprawl is a myth. Naturally, sprawl does benefit some people – real estate sales persons, and developers make big money. And, money talks. A development requiring taxpayer funding from a lot of people may yield a single developer many millions of dollars. The beneficiaries talk the loudest, have greatest media influence and assure that friendly officials are elected. Speculators, land developers and mega-store promoters are the drivers of sprawl growth. The taxpayers who annually subsidize sprawl are numerous, unaware, disorganized and lack a strong voice.

Amy Kerr, an Oregon environmentalist, quoted in *Better Not Bigger*[36] calls urban sprawl: "A pyramid scheme in which a relatively few make a killing, some others make a living, but most of us pay for it." The reporter continued: "As long as there is a killing to be made, no tepid "smart growth" measures are going to stop sprawl. We will go on having strips and malls and cookie cutter subdivisions and traffic jams and rising taxes as long as someone is making money from them."

It is a tough sell. We have been taught we should be able to drive anywhere, anytime. The private auto is private—we love our cars. Divorce is unthinkable. We buy huge houses, monster SUVs and flock to Wal-Mart and Home Depot. So, as Donald H. Meadows says:[37] "They get jobs building the subdivision, we lose open lands, clean water and wildlife. Then we subsidize them with our taxes. That, the tax subsidy is not the market. It's local politics. Collectively we set out pots of subsidized honey at which they dip. We can't expect them not to dip; we can only expect them to howl if the subsidy is taken away."

Despite an uneven playing field sprawl is under attack. The Toronto Star ran a special issue on sprawl last June. The Globe and Mail ran a series September 25 to 30, 2000. Toronto Life recently featured "The Story of Sprawl." [38] This spring U.S. News and World Report produced a special sprawl issue and this July, National Geographic featured the sprawl issue. The Greater Toronto Services Board appear to be on track. Even our "Common Sense" Premier is catching on. The Globe and Mail quoted Premier Harris: "Ontario is about to face a revolution in the way its cities grow and are governed. The revolution will see the province take a more direct role in determining where new highways, water lines and subdivisions are located, to control sprawl." [39]

We live in a democracy. We can't tell people where to live. Those being subsidized to commute will not appreciate paying full cost. The sprawl disease will not be treated until the public demand treatment. The enlightened will have to lead the crusade. Individuals can demand less pollution, drive less, promote more sustainable life styles, support conservation initiatives such as land trust conservation easement programs and promote the many benefits of city living.

[36] Eber Fodor, Bigger Not Better.

[37] Donald H. Meadows, The Global Citizen, March 1999.

[38] John Lornie, The Story of Sprawl, Toronto Life, May 2002.

[39] John Ibson and Richard Mackie, The Globe and Mail, January 11, 2000.

***Recommended Federal Initiates To Promote Smart Growth***

- Develop a national transportation policy targeted at sustainable living, that is supportive of land and energy conservation and federal clean air commitments.
- Develop a national housing policy that supports energy efficient, affordable shelter for all Canadians.
- Provide funding to cover the extra costs of settling new emigrants in urban regions.
- Amend the Income Tax Act (Regulations) to exempt all deemed capital gains when Canadians donate ecologically sensitive or quality foodland or an interest in land (an easement) to a charitable conservation trust.
- Treat farm wood lots, water courses and Class 1 to 3 agricultural land in the same manner as "ecological lands" to encourage donations of land and easements.
- Insure that surplus federal lands such as those expropriated for the Pickering airport are protected from sprawl by conservation easements or are given park status.
- Provide conservation grants to cities for public transit construction and to establish policies that encourage brownfield developments, intensification and redevelopment.

*The Province of Ontario* has the ultimate authority/responsibility for controlling sprawl and implementing 'smart growth'. Our constitution clearly delegates responsibility for land use to the province, which limits the power of municipalities to institute non-sprawl land use controls.

***Recommended Provincial Initiatives***

*The Planning Act & Provincial Policy Statement*

- Amend the Planning Act to make it and the attendant Provincial Policy Statement very clear that the province opposes urban sprawl.
- Require the Municipalities to "comply with" - not merely "have regard to" - the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Direct the Ontario Municipal Board to comply with the Province's Smart Growth policies.
- Establish permanent agriculture zones of Class 1 to 3 foodland by issuing a Ministers Zoning Order, or pass a Foodland Protection Act.
- Include farmland protection without exception in the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Direct the Ministry of the Environment to encourage brownfield development proposals.
- Require industrial/commercial assessment revenue to be distributed across all GTA municipalities.

*Municipal Official Plans and Building Codes*

- Require all municipalities to include smart growth plans within their Official Plans.
- Require municipalities to determine and disclose urban coverage, densities, and potential development/redevelopment and intensification opportunities.
- Amend building codes to remove obstacles to smart growth - setbacks, minimum dwelling/lot size, parking requirements - any regulations or bylaws that inhibit redevelopment, intensification and freedom to build affordable housing.
- Permit second suite conversions "as-of-right."
- Require each Region of the GTA to provide a fair share of affordable housing.
- Require Official Plans to prescribe urban growth boundaries. The GTSB has reported that Greater Toronto needs "a clear definition of our collective priorities for the countryside from a GTA perspective and a corresponding commitment to co-ordinate transportation and infrastructure decisions and the planning appeal process..." "The GTSB has also called for…defining growth boundaries, maximizing existing infrastructure and intensifying development in a more compact form..."

*Transportation and Infrastructure*

- Provide funding for Go Transit and other public transit from funds that would otherwise go to highway construction.
- Encourage densification by investing in urban infrastructure: a comprehensive transit system and urban amenities.
- Implement full cost recovery of auto-related direct and external costs from fuel taxes or tolls.
- Assign responsibility and authority to the GTSB for sprawl control and hold them accountable for smart growth development. The GTSB should carry out this mandate by withholding new sprawl-inducing services and upgrading inner urban amenities, services and transit.
- In urban areas, institute traffic calming, plant more trees, and allow roadside parking.
- Give priority to pedestrians and cyclists - more sidewalks, narrow streets, cross-walks, bike paths, walkways and trails.
- Encourage "ride share," dedicated lanes and multiple car occupancy.
- Deregulate to allow private bus and taxi services.
- Replace lost rail links to provide for inter-modal rail transport of goods.

*Agriculture, Rural and Countryside*

The second-highest economic provider in Durham Region is Agriculture. Measures to ensure continued economic prosperity in this sector include:

- Pass a Farmland Protection Act or issue a Minister's Zoning Order similar to that issued to protect the Aggregate Industry.

- Reintroduce a program like the 1995 Niagara Tender Fruitlands Program but for any Class 1 to 3 foodland in the GTA.
- Increase all lot levies for greenfield development to pay for sewers, water, schools and roads. Implement a sliding scale related to public cost: low for serviced lots within exist ing urban boundaries; zero for redevelopment, conversions and brownfield; high for "monster" houses in rural areas.
- Require each Region to disallow new developments on Class 1 to 3 prime foodlands or in existing permanent agricultural zones.
- Require a lot size of 100 acres (40 ha) minimum in rural designated areas.
- Disallow communal servicing of rural areas except to mitigate an existing pollution or health problems (i.e., never as a tool for new developments in the rural area).
- Protect GTA valley lands running through the provincial lands by deeding the valleys and ample set back to the Conservation Authority.

*Redevelopment*

- Tax vacant land at a higher rate than buildings in existing urban areas to encourage infill development.
- Simplify the building permit process for conversions and redevelopment normally under-taken by small business in existing urban areas.
- Fund redevelopment proposals.
- Eliminate "Discriminatory Zoning"– restrictions on lot size, building type, development size, density and setbacks.
- Require developer levies to cover the cost of new schools in new developments where existing urban schools are underutilized.
- Establish a scale of lot levies that reward redevelopment and brownfields development within urban areas.
- Provide tax incentives for intensification/redevelopment of existing urban space.
- Allow and encourage mixed-use residential/commercial at higher densities and multiple use buildings.
- Plan pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods where people have transportation choices such as commuter trains, trams or buses.
- Return to "main street" planning and away from "sprawl-mall" planning in urban areas of GTA Regions.

*Implement these initiatives to ensure a sustainable future, reduced pollution, better and safer communities, and a higher quality of life. At the same time, we can enjoy a more efficient and prosperous economy and lower cost of living—and there will be a magnificent tax cut for all Ontario citizens.*

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